

REMARKS

The above amendments and following remarks are responsive to the points raised in the July 29, 2005 final Office Action. Upon entry of the above amendments, Claims 1, 7, 8, and 10 will have been amended, Claims 3 and 9 will have been canceled, and Claims 1, 3-8, and 10-13 will be pending. No new matter has been introduced. Entry and reconsideration are respectfully requested.

Information Disclosure Statement April 11, 2005

On April 11, 2005, Applicants filed an Information Disclosure Statement (IDS), which accompanied the Response and Request for Reconsideration filed on the same date.

The July 29, 2005 final Office Action did not include an initialed, dated, and signed copy of the Form PTO-1449 Information Disclosure Citation (Form PTO-1449) submitted with the April 11, 2005 IDS. A review of the Image File Wrapper available through private PAIR via the United States Patent and Trademark Office Internet web site, shows that the above-identified IDS has been received by the USPTO and placed of record in the application file. For the Examiner's convenience, a copy of the IDS, printed from PAIR, has been included with this Amendment for his consideration.

In view of the above, Applicant requests that the Examiner consider the cited prior art and return a copy of the initialed, dated, and signed Form-1449s to Applicants with the next Office Action.

Response to Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

Claims 1-13 have been rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being unpatentable over US Patent 6,661,544 to Okino et al. Applicant traverses this rejection.

Independent Claim 1 has been amended to more clearly recite an illumination device including, inter alia, a first diffusion region and a second diffusion region inserted in an optical path of a plurality of light sources between the light sources and the entrance surface,

“wherein said second diffusion region is common to light beams coming from the plurality of light sources, and

wherein the plurality of light sources are shifted from a plane, which is normal to a surface of the first diffusion region and pass through a center of the first diffusion region in a width direction, in a direction perpendicular to the longitudinal direction.”

In the invention recited in Claim 1, the effect that light amount emitted from a vicinity of the light sources is reduced and light amount distribution of light output from the longitudinal direction of the light guide member can be uniform, is obtained by the feature recited in the second wherein clause.

Conventionally, a plurality of light sources cannot arrange the same position, in the case that the apparatus has a plurality of light sources, and light amount distributions of the light sources do not become the same. This problem is solved in the present invention by arranging a second diffusion region between the plurality of light sources and the entrance surface.

Therefore, in the present invention, a uniformity of a light amount distribution in a longitudinal direction of the light guide member is accomplished and a uniformity of light amount distributions of different light sources are accomplished without enlargement of the apparatus. Further, high quality reading of a color image is accomplished.

On the contrary, the cited reference of Okino does not disclose the above features of the present invention and does not suggest the above problem to be solved. As such, the illumination device as recited in Claim 1 is distinguished over the applied prior art reference of Okino as well as . Dependent Claims 3-8 and 10-13, which depend upon Claim 1, are likewise distinguished over the prior art reference of Okino for at least the same reasons discussed above in regard to Claim 1.

The cited reference of US Patent 5,499,112, (the '112 patent) in the accompanied Information Disclosure Statement discloses that a plurality of light sources are shifted from a plane, which is normal to a surface of a diffusion region and is passed through a center of the diffusion region in the width direction, in a direction perpendicular to the longitudinal direction. However, this feature can accomplish a uniformity of a light amount distribution in a longitudinal direction of a light guide member, but cannot accomplish a uniformity of light distributions of a plurality of light sources. Further, such problem is not disclosed in the '112 patent. As such, Claim 1, as well as Claims 3-8 and 10-13 are distinguished from the '112 patent.

Accordingly, the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) should be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 1, 3-8, and 10-13 are in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

AUTHORIZATION

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees which may be required for filing this Amendment and Request for Reconsideration to Deposit Account No. 13-4503, Order No. 1232-4719.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: October 12, 2005

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